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Ulbricht's Status. Khrushchev's references to Ulbricht were nominal, while his praise of the SED was about standard for the occasion. No firm conclusions are possible from the speech regarding Khrushchev's plans for Ulbricht. If some decline in his position were in the offing the speech would certainly not be incompatible with it. A drastic demotion, on the other hand, is unlikely. Whatever the fortunes of individual East German leaders Khrushchev made clear that he expected the SED regime to extract higher productivity from the populace and to be on guard against subversive intellectual influences from West Germany. (He indicated in this connection that Soviet intellectuals, too, would be hearing more from him as soon as he returns to Moscow.)

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